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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000648

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SUBJECT: PUNTLAND MOVING FURTHER AWAY FROM THE TFG

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. The newly elected President of Puntland, Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed "Farole," told the Ambassador on March 14 that he felt Puntland was not being represented within the Djibouti peace process, and that UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah was an obstacle to progress. Farole said he wanted a decentralized federal government for Somalia and said he would oppose a Hawiye led centralized government. He argued for a "bottom up" approach whereby each region of Somalia established a functioning local government first, from which the local governments could come together and establish a federal system. Farole asked that the international community not lift the arms embargo on Somalia because he said it would arm the "Islamists" in the south, and start a civil war. Farole also argued against international recognition of Somaliland, which he predicted would bring war with Puntland. He said Puntland was ready to fight piracy with help from the international community. Lastly, Farole asked that USAID open an office in Puntland. The Puntland Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Farah Dala, and the Minister for the Democratization Process, Dr. Abdi Hassan Jum'ale, were also in attendance. End Summary.

UN SRSG Ould-Abdallah "is a closed road"

¶2. (C/NF) Farole opened by complaining that the Djibouti peace process was not representative of all of Somalia, and he argued that UN SRSG Ould-Abdallah was ignoring Puntland, and was an obstacle to progress. Farole provided the Ambassador a copy of a March 4 letter from Farole to the SRSG laying out Puntland's position on the peace process and its requirements for moving forward. The letter says that if Puntland is not given a formal voice in the selection of new senior officials, then Puntland will not recognize those officials as legitimate. (Note: The full text of the letter is included below. End Note.)

¶3. (C/NF) Farole considered Puntland to be the current real government in Somalia because he said the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) did "not really exist as a government yet." He went on to reiterate that the TFG did not represent Puntland, and he noted that the additional 275 parliament members were "elected by no one," and "they were picked to support President Sheikh Sharif." In response to the Ambassador's query, Farole said Sharif had made no attempt to reach out to him. Farole said he had been contacted by Prime Minister Sharmarke, and noted that he had warned Sharmarke not to allow himself to be used by Sharif

against Puntland. (Note: Farole and Sharmarke are both from the Darood/Majerteen subclan. End Note.) On the recent acceptance of Sharia law by Sharif, Farole feared that true agenda of the advocates of Sharia was to replace the TFG charter and government entirely with a cleric-led government.

He believed the advocates would not be satisfied by a TFG that only adopted a few moderate Sharia principles "to appear in compliance with Sharia law."

Hawiye vs. Darood a Key Issue

14. (C/NF) Farole said the Hawiye clans, who now control Mogadishu, want a highly centralized government that they control. He said his Puntlanders wanted a decentralized government in a federal system. He asserted that the Hawiye think their control of Mogadishu gives them "legitimacy" to rule Somalia. Farole and his ministers went on to explain how they and their families (meaning their Darood clansmen) had been expelled from Mogadishu and their property confiscated by the Hawiye when Siad Barre's government fell in the early 1990s. Farole said these issues still remained to be resolved, and he asked "who says Somalia's capital has to be Mogadishu?" (Note: The Hawiye and Darood clans are the two largest and most powerful clans in Somalia, although both are plagued by internal subclan divisions. End Note.)

An Argument for a "Bottom Up" Approach in Somalia

15. (C/NF) A "bottom up" approach would be better, Farole

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argued, where a federal system would be created after all the regions of Somalia established local governments or states. Once each area of Somalia had a state government, then the states could get together to establish a federal system. He said the "southerners" needed to get their "own house in order" before looking to establish control over Puntland. He asked "why should the TFG rule Puntland when they can't even establish order in Mogadishu and southern Somalia?" Farole said although he was supportive of a federal system, he suggested that there might be better alternative systems than the TFG as currently configured.

Farole: "Do Not Lift the Arms Embargo"

16. (C/NF) President Farole insisted that the international community not lift the UN arms embargo currently imposed on Somalia. He predicted that such an act "would open the door for another civil war" similar to what Somalia experienced in the early 1990s. Farole asked rhetorically, "why would the international community want to provide arms to Islamists who want to take over all of Somalia?" He said Sharif wants to arm 10,000 troops, and asked, "what do you think he wants to do with those troops?" suggesting that those troops could be used against Puntland.

Farole: "Do Not Recognize Somaliland"

17. (C/NF) International recognition of Somaliland would lead to open war with Puntland, Farole predicted, because once recognized the Somalilanders would attempt to resolve their border dispute with Puntland by force. Farole was adamant that the United States not grant the recognition the Somalilanders were seeking. Farole said he was aware that the Somalilanders had recently met with Ambassador Rice, and he understood that she was "sympathetic" to their request. He insisted that recognition, if it was to come, should come from the Somalis first, then the international community. Farole said his government did not want conflict with Somaliland, but underscored that they would not adhere to a colonial border "set by the British and the Italians, but not by us." Rather, if one looked at reality on the ground, the

people in Sool and Sanaag areas were Puntlanders, not Somalilanders, Farole said. In response to the Ambassador's query, Farole said he had had some contact with Somaliland President Kahin, but said Kahin did not want to be seen talking with him prior to the upcoming Somaliland elections.

Puntland Ready to Fight Piracy, with Help

18. (C/NF) On the issue of piracy, Farole said the international community "had it wrong." He said the only way to combat piracy was from the land, not from the sea. He criticized the international community for spending huge amounts of money with no results. He asserted that for the cost of one of the naval ships now patrolling off Somalia, a program could be established in Puntland with a 500 man security force and a few speedboats that would end the piracy problem. He also thought any new counter-piracy program should be headquartered in Puntland, and not in Djibouti.

Request for Assistance from Washington

19. (C/NF) Lastly, Farole wanted more assistance from the United States. Specifically, he wanted USAID to open an office in Puntland. He also asked whether Washington could finance the paving of at least one of Puntland's gravel airstrips. He lamented that Puntland did not have a single paved runway. The Ambassador promised only to pass his requests forward.

Comment

110. (C/NF) Puntland has long viewed the TFG, and more recently the Djibouti process, with skepticism, and as a result kept the TFG at arm's length well before Farole or Sheikh Sharif were elected for fear that the TFG would impose too much on the Puntland Administration's activities and revenue collection, but Puntland's resistance to the TFG

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appears to be increasing. Farole stopped short of threatening to leave the TFG process altogether, but continued to pay lip service to the establishment of a decentralized federal system of government for Somalia. However, clan politics remains at the heart of the issue, and our conversation with Farole and his ministers made clear that they have no intention of allowing Puntland, a Darood entity, to become subservient to a Hawiye dominated TFG no matter how it is configured. Unless Sharif can find a way to alleviate Puntland's concerns, as well as the concerns of the southern Somalia Darood/Marehan who are also feeling disenfranchised by the Sharif government, the TFG risks remaining a Hawiye dominated government with only token representation from the remaining clans, unable to develop into a viable national federal government. End Comment.

Text of March 4 Puntland Letter to SRSG Ould Abdallah

Begin Text.

His Excellency,

As a matter of fact, Puntland State of Somalia, since its inception in 1998, has been striving for the achievement of a genuine resolution for the protracted conflict of Somalia and restoration of its dignity and statehood in the family of sovereign nations. In a same way, the new Administration of Puntland and its people will continue to support any legitimate, meaningful and representative reconciliation of the Somali people in the future.

However, Puntland Administration and its vibrant civil society groups are regrettably not represented reasonably in the reconciliation process under the sponsorship of the United Nations and the International Community, which was

going to Djibouti since last year. Nevertheless, we believe the process is, presumably a national forum that all parties should fairly and authentically represented. And, with that objective in mind the process can only be successful.

Therefore, it is our paramount obligation, that the new Puntland State Administration, together with its key groups, notably non-state actors, to spell out our sincere and genuine position towards the on-going political process evolving in Djibouti.

--1. Puntland Administration shall be part of any political and social reconciliation initiative for Somalia.

--2. The selection of representatives to such initiatives will be jointly undertaken by the Administration and its civil society organizations.

--3. Any appointment for the new parliament, allocated through the 4.5 with the current Djibouti process and intended for the people of his part of Somalia, shall be forwarded to the administration and hence appointed by respective constituencies and its civil society groups.

--4. Any new members appointed through informal pick ups and without the consultation of the Administration and its constituencies will not be recognized as legitimate representatives of our people.

It is also noteworthy to mention that Puntland Administration and its people did not regard the 4.5 allocation system as fair, but shall adopt and regard it as shock therapy until such time when a better system is divided. With my high consideration, please accept my appreciation for your ceaseless efforts to restore peace and stability in Somalia. (signed Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed "Farole") End Text.
YAMAMOTO